

Equity and Diversity

PAM 202 Integrated Paramedic Concepts

In this course we began to speak about differences in the presentation of patient conditions and also the background that every patient has. All backgrounds are different. The following exercise was incorporated to stress the recognition of differences in people.

Goal

To help participants recognize the differences among people, as well as the many similarities people share.

Time

10–15 minutes

Materials

Open space large enough for two people to take a short walk

Procedure

Two “volunteers” come forward and stand with backs together. Ask the “audience” to call out things about these two volunteers that are different. Differences sometimes pull us apart. As each difference is called, the volunteers take one step apart. When they reach the end of the available space, have them turn and face each other. Now, ask the audience to call out similarities of the volunteers. As each similarity is called out, the volunteers take one step toward each other.

Discussion

1. Think about the things that were noted as differences. How many were things that we can easily see (gender, size, hair color, skin color, dress, wearing glasses or not, etc.)?
2. What were some of the similarities? While certain physical characteristics are similar, many other similarities are not so visible. Perhaps both “volunteers” are enthusiastic or both have similar interests or goals in life.
3. Talk about the importance of the differences and of the similarities among members of the group. Be sure to talk about the importance of accepting and welcoming all members into the group.

Findings

The exercise was well received and the stimulated conversation was palpable between the students. This is an exercise that I plan to repeat with other groups. Students reported that it was a nice opportunity to see how differences can be addressed and embraced.